(b) the number of persons provided permanent jobs during last three years alongwith the percentage thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to give them the status of Government employees; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and would be placed on the Table of the House.

[English]

Upgradation of Post Offices in U.P.

1530. SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to upgrade some branch and sub-post offices on the basis of population in Uttar Pradesh during 1997-98; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) Post Offices are not upgraded on the basis of population. A target of opening 6 Departmental Sub Post Offices in Uttar Pradesh has been fixed for Annual Plan 1997-98 subject to availability of resources. These could either be new post offices or upgraded ones.

[Translation]

Modernisation of Computerised Railway Reservation

1531. SHRI RAVINDER KUMAR PANDEY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to improve the computerised Railway reservation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the computers installed at return ticket reservation counter in Delhi remained out of order for several days during May-June, 1997; and

(d) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken to solve such problems?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) and (b) Improvement and modernisation of computerised passenger reservation service is an on-going process and steps are regularly being taken to improve the quality of service to passengers by introducing facilities namely.

(1) Automated reservation status enquiry through Interactive Voice Response System in which telephonic enquiries are answered promoptly an efficiently through a computer simulated voice.

(2) Facility of Reservation Availability Position Information Display (RAPID) which has been provided at major reservation officers.

(3) Networking of the five main computer systems, the software for which has already been partially developed and implemented at Delhi and Secunderabad. Networking is proposed to be done between these two Systems in the first phase.

(4) Installation of high speed telecommunication links between the five main systems to substantially increase the efficiency and speed of data transfer.

(5) Expansion of computer reservation facilities to additional stations from year to year and opening of additional satellite reservation offices in the metropolitan and major towns.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. There is no such instance when computers installed at return ticket reservation counter in Delhi remained out of order for several days during May-June, 1997. However, there were recurring problems in telecommunication channel links in 5 systems at Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai, Madras and Secunderabad. The average working period of counters was mantained at 97% efficiency level.

[Translation]

New Line from Darbhanga to Hasanpur

1532. SHRIMATI SUBHAWATI DEVI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are contemplating to lay a new railway line from Darbhanga to Hasanpur Kusheswar;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) to (c) No, Sir. However, a new line is already under construction from Sakri to Hasanpur via Kusheswarsthan. A survey has been taken up for construction of a new line from Darbhanga to Saharsa via Kusheswarsthan. Further consideration of the project will be possible once the survey report becomes available.

[English]

Liquid Fuel Power Plants

1533. SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the liquid fuel based power plants are considered to be short term solution to the shortage of power in the country;

(b) whether the Government have taken a decision to subsidised the liquid fuel imports for power plants under the administered pricing mechanism;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the likely effect thereof on the feasibility of setting up of liquid fuel power plants in the country?